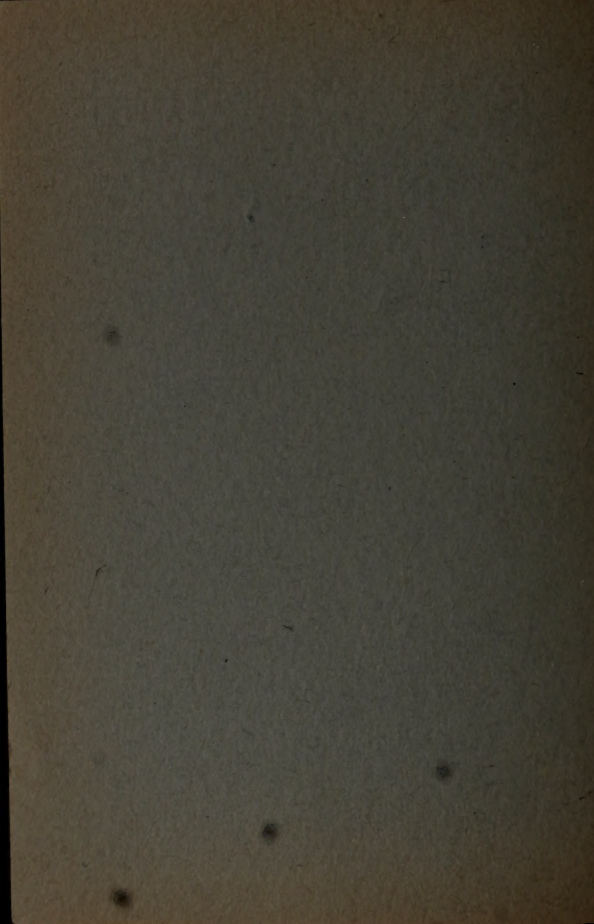


LITTLE BLUE BOOK NO. 1056  
Edited by E. Haldeman-Julius

# The Devil's Dictionary

Ambrose Bierce



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## PREFACE

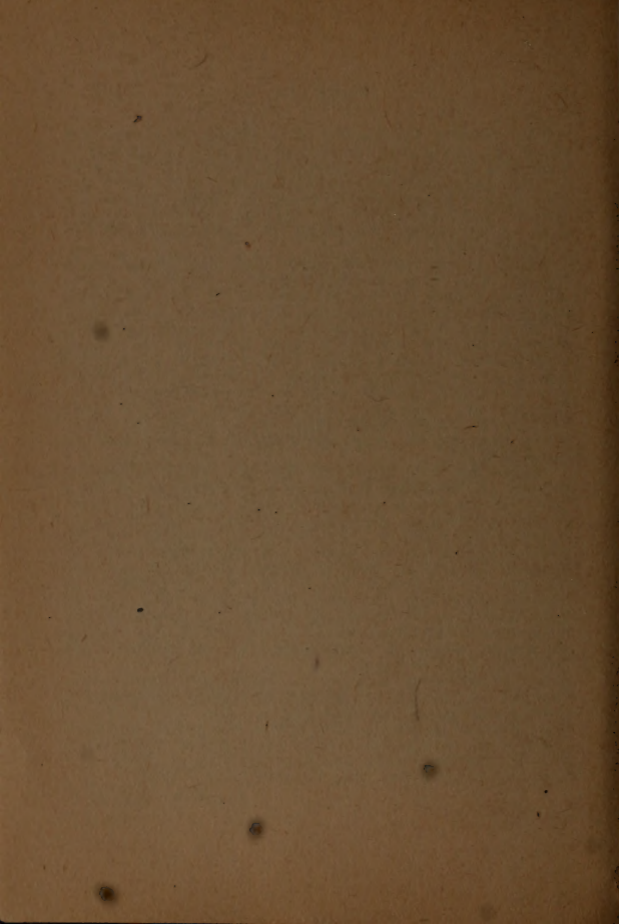
*The Devil's Dictionary* was begun in a weekly paper in 1881, and was continued in a desultory way and at long intervals until 1906. In that year a large part of it was published in covers with the title *The Cynic's Word Book*, a name which the author had not the power to reject nor the happiness to approve. To quote the publishers of the present work:

"This more reverent title had previously been forced upon him by the religious scruples of the last newspaper in which a part of the work had appeared, with the natural consequence that when it came out in covers the country already had been flooded by its imitators with a score of 'cynic' books—*The Cynic's This*, *The Cynic's That*, and *The Cynic's t'Other*. Most of these books were merely stupid, though some of them added the distinction of silliness. Among them, they brought the word 'cynic' into disfavor so deep that any book bearing it was discredited in advance of publication."

Meantime, too, some of the enterprising humorists of the country had helped themselves to such parts of the work as served their needs, and many of its definitions, anecdotes, phrases and so forth, had become more or less current in popular speech. This explanation is made, not with any pride of priority in trifles, but in simple denial of possible charges of plagiarism, which is no trifle. In merely resuming his own the author hopes to be held guiltless by those to whom the work is addressed—enlightened souls who prefer dry wines to sweet, sense to sentiment, wit to humor and clean English to slang.

A conspicuous, and it is hoped not unpleasing, feature of the book is its abundant illustrative quotations from eminent poets, chief of whom is that learned and ingenious cleric, Father Gassalasca Jape, S. J., whose lines bear his initials. To Father Jape's kindly encouragement and assistance the author of the prose text is greatly indebted.

AMBROSE BIERCE.



# THE DEVIL'S DICTIONARY

## A

**ABNORMAL**, *adj.* Not conforming to standard. In matters of thought and conduct, to be independent is to be abnormal, to be abnormal is to be detested. Wherefore the lexicographer adviseth a striving toward a straiter resemblance to the Average Man than he hath to himself. Whoso attaineth thereto shall have peace, the prospect of death and the hope of Hell.

**ABSOLUTE**, *adj.* Independent, irresponsible. An absolute monarchy is one in which the sovereign does as he pleases so long as he pleases the assassins. Not many absolute monarchies are left, most of them having been replaced by limited monarchies, where the sovereign's power for evil (and for good) is greatly curtailed, and by republics, which are governed by chance.

**ABSTAINER**, *n.* A weak person who yields to the temptation of denying himself a pleasure. A total abstainer is one who abstains from everything but abstention, and especially from inactivity in the affairs of others.

**ABSURDITY**, *n.* A statement or belief manifestly inconsistent with one's own opinion.

**ACADEME**, *n.* An ancient school where morality and philosophy were taught.

**ACADEMY**, *n.* (from *academe*). A modern school where football is taught.

**ACHIEVEMENT**, *n.* The death of endeavor and the birth of disgust.

**ACQUAINTANCE**, *n.* A person whom we know well enough to borrow from, but not well

enough to lend to. A degree of friendship called slight when its object is poor or obscure, and intimate when he is rich or famous.

ADAMANT, *n.* A mineral frequently found beneath a corset. Soluble in solicitate of gold.

ADHERENT, *n.* A follower who has not yet obtained all that he expects to get.

ADMIRATION, *n.* Our polite recognition of another's resemblance to ourselves.

AIM, *n.* The task we set our wishes to.

"Cheer up! Have you no aim in life?"

She tenderly inquired.

"An aim? Well, no, I haven't, wife;

The fact is—I have fired."

—G. J.

ALLIANCE, *n.* In international politics, the union of two thieves who have their hands so deeply inserted in each other's pocket that they cannot separately plunder a third.

APOLOGIZE, *v. i.* To lay the foundation for a future offense.

APPETITE, *n.* An instinct thoughtfully implanted by Providence as a solution to the labor question.

APPLAUSE, *n.* The echo of a platitude.

ARDOR, *n.* The quality that distinguishes love without knowledge.

ARISTOCRACY, *n.* Government by the best men. (In this sense the word is obsolete; so is that kind of government.) Fellows that wear downy hats and clean shirts—guilty of education and suspected of bank accounts.

ARTLESSNESS, *n.* A certain engaging quality to which women attain by long study and severe practice upon the admiring male, who



is pleased to fancy it resembles the candid simplicity of his young.

ASPERSE, *v. t.* Maliciously to ascribe to another vicious actions which one has not had the temptation and opportunity to commit.

## B

BACK, *n.* That part of your friend which it is your privilege to contemplate in your adversity.

BACKBITE, *v. t.* To speak of a man as you find him when he can't find you.

BAIT, *n.* A preparation that renders the hook more palatable. The best kind is beauty.

BAROMETER, *n.* An ingenious instrument which indicates what kind of weather we are having.

BELLADONNA, *n.* In Italian a beautiful lady; in English a deadly poison. A striking example of the essential identity of the two tongues.

BIGOT, *n.* One who is obstinately and zealously attached to an opinion that you do not entertain.

BIRTH, *n.* The first and direst of all disasters. As to the nature of it there appears to be no uniformity. Castor and Pollux were born from the egg. Pallas came out of a skull. Galatea was once a block of stone. Peresilis, who wrote in the tenth century, avers that he grew up out of the ground where a priest had spilled holy water. It is known that Arimaxus was derived from a hole in the earth, made by a stroke of lightning. Leucomodon was the son of a cavern in Mount *Ætna*, and I have myself seen a man come out of a wine cellar.

**BORE**, *n.* A person who talks when you wish him to listen.

**BOUNDARY**, *n.* In political geography, an imaginary line between two nations, separating the imaginary rights of one from the imaginary rights of the other.

**BRAIN**, *n.* An apparatus with which we think that we think. That which distinguishes the man who is content to *be* something from the man who wishes to *do* something. A man of great wealth, or one who has been pitchforked into high station, has commonly such a headful of brain that his neighbors cannot keep their hats on. In our civilization, and under our republican form of government, brain is so highly honored that it is rewarded by exemption from the cares of office.

## C

**CALAMITY**, *n.* A more than commonly plain and unmistakable reminder that the affairs of this life are not of our own ordering. Calamities are of two kinds: misfortune to ourselves, and good fortune to others.

**CANONICALS**, *n.* The motley worn by Jesters of the Court of Heaven.

**CAPITAL**, *n.* The seat of misgovernment. That which provides fire, the pot, the dinner, the table and the knife and fork for the anarchist; the part of the repast that he himself supplies is the disgrace before meat. *Capital Punishment*, a penalty regarding the justice and expediency of which many worthy persons—including all the assassins—entertain grave misgivings.

**CAT**, *n.* A soft, indestructible automaton provided by nature to be kicked when things go wrong in the domestic circle.

**CHILDHOOD**, *n.* The period of human life intermediate between the idiocy of infancy and the folly of youth—two removes from the sin of manhood and three from the remorse of age.

**CHRISTIAN**, *n.* One who believes that the New Testament is a divinely inspired book admirably suited to the spiritual needs of his neighbor. One who follows the teachings of Christ in so far as they are not inconsistent with a life of sin.

I dreamed I stood upon a hill, and, lo!  
 The godly multitudes walked to and fro  
 Beneath, in Sabbath garments fitly clad,  
 With pious mien, appropriately sad,  
 While all the church bells made a solemn din—  
 A fire-alarm to those who lived in sin.  
 Then saw I gazing thoughtfully below,  
 With tranquil face, upon that holy show  
 A tall, spare figure in a robe of white,  
 Whose eyes diffused a melancholy light.  
 "God keep you, stranger," I exclaimed. "You are  
 No doubt (your habit shows it) from afar;  
 And yet I entertain the hope that you,  
 Like these good people, are a Christian too."  
 He raised his eyes and with a look so stern  
 It made me with a thousand blushes burn  
 Replied—his manner with disdain was spiced:  
 "What! I a Christian? No, indeed! I'm Christ."  
 —G. J.

**CIRCUS**, *n.* A place where horses, ponies and elephants are permitted to see men, women and children acting the fool.

**CLAIRVOYANT**, *n.* A person, commonly a woman, who has the power of seeing that which is invisible to her patron—namely, that he is a blockhead.

**CLERGYMAN, n.** A man who undertakes the management of our spiritual affairs as a method of bettering his temporal one.

**CLOCK, n.** A machine of great moral value to man, allaying his concern for the future by reminding him what a lot of time remains to him.

**CONGRATULATIONS, n.** The civility of envy.

**CONNOISSEUR, n.** A specialist who knows everything about something and nothing about anything else.

An old wine-bibber having been smashed in a railway collision, some wine was poured upon his lips to revive him. "Pauillac, 1873," he murmured, and died.

**CONSERVATIVE, n.** A statesman who is enamored of existing evils, as distinguished from the Liberal, who wishes to replace them with others.

**CONSULT, v. t.** To seek another's approval of a course already decided on.

**CONTEMPT, n.** The feeling of a prudent man for an enemy who is too formidable safely to be opposed.

**CORPORATION, n.** An ingenious device for obtaining individual profit without individual responsibility.

**COWARD, n.** One who in a perilous emergency thinks with his legs.

**CUPID, n.** The so-called god of love. This bastard creation of a barbarous fancy was no doubt inflicted upon mythology for the sins of its deities. Of all unbeautiful and inappropriate conceptions this is the most reasonless and offensive. The notion of symbolizing sexual love by a semi-sexless babe, and comparing the

pains of passion to the wounds of an arrow—of introducing this pudgy homunculus into art grossly to materialize the subtle spirit and suggestion of the work—this is eminently worthy of the age that, giving it birth, laid it on the doorstep of posterity.

**CURIOSITY.** *n.* An objectionable quality of the female mind. The desire to know whether or not a woman is cursed with curiosity is one of the most active and insatiable passions of the masculine soul.

## D

**DAMN.** *v.* A word formerly much used by the Paphlagonians, the meaning of which is lost. By the learned Dr. Dolabelly Gak it is believed to have been a term of satisfaction, implying the highest possible degree of mental tranquillity. Professor Groke, on the contrary, thinks it expressed an emotion of tumultuous delight, because it so frequently occurs in combination with the word *jod* or *god*, meaning "joy." It would be with great diffidence that I should advance an opinion conflicting with that of either of these formidable authorities.

**DANCE.** *v. i.* To leap about to the sound of tittering music, preferably with arms about your neighbor's wife or daughter. There are many kinds of dances, but all those requiring the participation of the two sexes have two characteristics in common: they are conspicuously innocent, and warmly loved by the vicious.

**DAY.** *n.* A period of twenty-four hours, mostly misspent. This period is divided into two parts, the day proper and the night, or day im-

proper—the former devoted to sins of business, the latter consecrated to the other sort. These two kinds of social activity overlap.

DECALOGUE, *n.* A series of commandments, ten in number—just enough to permit an intelligent selection for observance, but not enough to embarrass the choice. Following is the revised edition of the Decalogue, calculated for this meridian.

Thou shalt no God but me adore:  
'Twere too expensive to have more.

No images nor idols make  
For Robert Ingersoll to break.

Take not God's name in vain; select  
A time when it will have effect.

Work not on Sabbath days at all,  
But go to see the teams play ball.

Honor thy parents. That creates  
For life insurance lower rates.

Kill not, abet not those who kill;  
Thou shalt not pay thy butcher's bill.

Kiss not thy neighbor's wife, unless  
Thine own thy neighbor doth caress.

Don't steal; thou'lt never thus compete  
Successfully in business. Cheat.

Bear not false witness—that is low—  
But "hear 'tis rumored so and so."

Covet thou naught that thou hast not  
By hook or crook, or somehow, got.  
—G. J.

DELUSION, *n.* The father of a most respectable family, comprising Enthusiasm, Affection, Self-denial, Faith, Hope, Charity and many other goodly sons and daughters.

All hail, Delusion! Were it not for thee  
The world turned topsy-turvy we should see;  
For Vice, respectable with cleanly fancies,  
Would fly abandoned Virtue's gross advances.

—*Mumfrey Mappel.*

**DESTINY, n.** A tyrant's authority for crime and a fool's excuse for failure.

**DIARY, n.** A daily record of that part of one's life, which he can relate to himself without blushing.

**DICTIONARY, n.** A malevolent literary device for cramping the growth of a language and making it hard and inelastic. This dictionary, however, is a most useful work.

**DIPLOMACY, n.** The patriotic art of lying for one's country.

**DISCUSSION, n.** A method of confirming others in their errors.

**DISOBEDIENCE, n.** The silver lining to the cloud of servitude.

**DISTANCE, n.** The only thing that the rich are willing for the poor to call theirs, and keep.

**DIVINATION, n.** The art of nosing out the occult. Divination is of as many kinds as there are fruit-bearing varieties of the flowering dunces and the early fool.

**DOG, n.** A kind of additional or subsidiary Deity designed to catch the overflow and surplus of the world's worship. This Divine Being in some of his smaller and silkier incarnations takes, in the affection of Woman, the place to which there is no human male aspirant. The Dog is a survival—an anachronism. He toils not, neither does he spin, yet Solomon in all his glory never lay upon a door-mat all day long, sun-soaked and fly-fed and fat, while his

master worked for the means wherewith to purchase an idle wag of the Solomonic tall, seasoned with a look of tolerant recognition.

## E

**ECCENTRICITY**, *n.* A method of distinction so cheap that fools employ it to accentuate their incapacity.

**EDIBLE**, *adj.* Good to eat, and wholesome to digest, as a worm to a toad, a toad to a snake, a snake to a pig, a pig to a man, and a man to a worm.

**EDUCATION**, *n.* That which discloses to the wise and disguises from the foolish their lack of understanding.

**EFFECT**, *n.* The second of two phenomena which always occur together in the same order. The first, called a Cause, is said to generate the other—which is no more sensible than it would be for one who has never seen a dog except in pursuit of a rabbit to declare the rabbit the cause of the dog.

**EGOTIST**, *n.* A person of low taste, more interested in himself than in me.

**ELOQUENCE** *n.* The art of orally persuading fools that white is the color that it appears to be. It includes the gift of making any color appear white.

**EMBALM**, *v. t.* To cheat vegetation by locking up the gases upon which it feeds. By embalming their dead and thereby deranging the natural balance between animal and vegetable life, the Egyptians made their once fertile and populous country barren and incapable of supporting more than a meager crew. The modern



metallic burial casket is a step in the same direction, and many a dead man who ought now to be ornamenting his neighbor's lawn as a tree, or enriching his table as a bunch of radishes, is doomed to a long inutility. We shall get him after awhile if we are spared, but in the meantime the violet and rose are languishing for a nibble at his *glutoeus maximus*.

ENVELOPE, *n.* The coffin of a document; the scabbard of a bill; the husk of a remittance; the bed-gown of a love-letter.

ERUDITION, *n.* Dust shaken out of a book into an empty skull.

EVANGELIST, *n.* A bearer of good tidings, particularly (in a religious sense) such as assure us of our own salvation and the damnation of our neighbors.

EXCESS, *n.* In morals, an indulgence that enforces by appropriate penalties the law of moderation.

EXECUTIVE, *n.* An officer of the Government, whose duty it is to enforce the wishes of the legislative power until such time as the judicial department shall be pleased to pronounce them invalid and of no effect.

EXILE, *n.* One who serves his country by residing abroad, yet is not an ambassador.

An English sea-captain, being asked if he had read "The Exile of Erin," replied: "No, sir; but I should like to anchor on it." Years afterward, when he had been hanged as a pirate after a career of unparalleled atrocities, the following memorandum was found in the ship's log that he had kept at the time of his reply:

"Aug. 3d, 1842. Made a joke on the ex-Isle of Erin. Coldly received. War with the whole world!"

**EXPERIENCE**, *n.* The wisdom that enables us to recognize as an undesirable old acquaintance the folly that we have already embraced.

**EXTINCTION**, *n.* The raw material out of which theology created the future state.

## F

**FAITH**, *n.* Belief without evidence in what is told by one who speaks without knowledge, of things without parallel.

**FASHION**, *n.* A despot whom the wise ridicule and obey.

**FELON**, *n.* A person of greater enterprise than discretion, who in embracing an opportunity has formed an unfortunate attachment.

**FEMALE**, *n.* One of the opposing, or unfair, sex.

**FIB**, *n.* A lie that has not cut its teeth. An habitual liar's nearest approach to truth: the perigee of his eccentric orbit.

**FICKLENESS**, *n.* The iterated satiety of an enterprising affection.

**FIDDLE**, *n.* An instrument to tickle human ears by friction of a horse's tail on the entrails of a cat.

**FIDELITY**, *n.* A virtue peculiar to those who are about to be betrayed.

**FINANCE**, *n.* The art or science of managing revenues and resources for the best advantage of the manager. The pronunciation of this word with the *i* long and the accent on the first syllable is one of America's most precious discoveries and possessions.

**FLAG**, *n.* A colored rag borne above troops and hoisted on forts and ships. It appears to

serve the same purpose as certain signs that one sees on vacant lots in London—"Rubbish may be shot here."

**FLESH, n.** The Second Person of the secular Trinity.

**FOLLY, n.** That "gift and faculty divine" whose creative and controlling energy inspires Man's mind, guides his actions and adorns his life.

**FOOL, n.** A person who pervades the domain of intellectual speculation and diffuses himself through the channels of moral activity. He is omnific, omniform, omnipercipient, omniscient, omnipotent. He it was who invented letters, printing, the railroad, the steamboat, the telegraph, the platitude and the circle of the sciences. He created patriotism and taught the nations war—founded theology, philosophy, law, medicine and Chicago. He established monarchical and republican government. He is from everlasting to everlasting—such as creation's dawn beheld he fooleth now. In the morning of time he sang upon primitive hills, and in the noonday of existence headed the procession of being. His grandmotherly hand has warmly tucked-in the set sun of civilization, and in the twilight he prepares Man's evening meal of milk-and-morality and turns down the covers of the universal grave. And after the rest of us shall have retired for the night of eternal oblivion he will sit up to write a history of human civilization.

**FORK, n.** An instrument used chiefly for the purpose of putting dead animals into the mouth. Formerly the knife was employed for

this purpose, and by many worthy persons is still thought to have many advantages over the other tool, which, however, they do not altogether reject, but use to assist in charging the knife. The immunity of these persons from swift and awful death is one of the most striking proofs of God's mercy to those that hate Him.

**FREEDOM**, *n.* Exemption from the stress of authority in a beggarly half dozen of restraint's infinite multitude of methods. A political condition that every nation supposes itself to enjoy in virtual monopoly. Liberty. The distinction between freedom and liberty is not accurately known; naturalists have never been able to find a living specimen of either.

**FREEMASONS**, *n.* An order with secret rites, grotesque ceremonies and fantastic costumes, which, originating in the reign of Charles II, among working artisans of London, has been joined successively by the dead of past centuries in unbroken retrogression until now it embraces all the generations of man on the hither side of Adam and is drumming up distinguished recruits among the pre-Creational inhabitants of Chaos and the Formless Void. The order was founded at different times by Charlemagne, Julius Cæsar, Cyrus, Solomon, Zoroaster, Confucius, Thothmes, and Buddha. Its emblems and symbols have been found in the Catacombs of Paris and Rome, on the stones of the Parthenon and the Chinese Great Wall, among the temples of Karnak and Palmyra and in the Egyptian Pyramids—always by a Freemason.

**FROG**, *n.* A reptile with edible legs. The frog is a diligent songster, having a good voice but no ear.

**FUNERAL**, *n.* A pageant whereby we attest our respect for the dead by enriching the undertaker, and strengthen our grief by an expenditure that deepens our groans and doubles our tears.

**FUTURE**, *n.* That period of time in which our affairs prosper, our friends are true and our happiness is assured.

## G

**GALLOWS**, *n.* A stage for the performance of miracle plays, in which the leading actor is translated to heaven. In this country the gallows is chiefly remarkable for the number of persons who escape it.

**GEOLOGY**, *n.* The science of the earth's crust—to which, doubtless, will be added that of its interior whenever a man shall come up garulous out of a well. The geological formations of the globe already noted are catalogued thus: The Primary, or lower one, consists of rocks, bones of mired mules, gas-pipes, miners' tools, antique statues minus the nose, Spanish doubloons and ancestors. The Secondary is largely made up of red worms and moles. The Tertiary comprises railway tracks, patent pavements, grass, snakes, mouldy boots, beer bottles, tomato cans, intoxicated citizens, garbage, anarchists, snap-dogs and fools.

**GHOST**, *n.* The outward and visible sign of an inward fear.

Accounting for the uncommon behavior of ghosts, Heine mentions somebody's ingenious

theory to the effect that they are as much afraid of us as we of them. Not quite, if I may judge from such tables of comparative speed as I am able to compile from memories of my own experience.

There is one insuperable obstacle to a belief in ghosts. A ghost never comes naked: he appears either in a winding-sheet or "in his habit as he lived." To believe in him, then, is to believe that not only have the dead the power to make themselves visible after there is nothing left of them, but that the same power inheres in textile fabrics. Supposing the products of the loom to have this ability, what object would they have in exercising it? And why does not the apparition of a suit of clothes sometimes walk abroad without a ghost in it? These be riddles of significance. They reach away down and get a convulsive grasp on the very tap-root of this flourishing faith.

**GLUTTON, n.** A person who escapes the evils of moderation by committing dyspepsia.

**GRAMMAR, n.** A system of pitfalls thoughtfully prepared for the feet of the self-made man, along the path by which he advances to distinction.

**GRAVE, n.** A place in which the dead are laid to await the coming of the medical student.

**GRAVITATION, n.** The tendency of all bodies to approach one another with a strength proportioned to the quantity of matter they contain—the quantity of matter they contain being ascertained by the strength of their tendency to approach one another. This is a lovely and

edifying illustration of how science, having made A the proof of B, makes B the proof of A.

**GUILLOTINE**, *n.* A machine which makes a Frenchman shrug his shoulders with good reason.

## H

**HALO**, *n.* Properly, a luminous ring encircling an astronomical body, but not infrequently confounded with "aureola," or "nimbus," a somewhat similar phenomenon worn as a head-dress by divinities and saints. The halo is a purely optical illusion, produced by moisture in the air, in the manner of a rainbow; but the aureola is conferred as a sign of superior sanctity, in the same way as a bishop's mitre, or the Pope's tiara. In the painting of the Nativity, by Szedgkin, a pious artist of Pesth, not only do the Virgin and the Child wear the nimbus, but an ass nibbling hay from the sacred manger is similarly decorated and, to his lasting honor be it said, appears to bear his unaccustomed dignity with a truly saintly grace.

**HAND**, *n.* A singular instrument worn at the end of the human arm and commonly thrust into somebody's pocket.

**HANDKERCHIEF**, *n.* A small square of silk or linen, used in various ignoble offices about the face and especially serviceable at funerals to conceal the lack of tears. The handkerchief is of recent invention; our ancestors knew nothing of it and intrusted its duties to the sleeve. Shakespeare's introducing it into the play of "Othello" is an anachronism: Desdemona dried her nose with her skirt, as Dr. Mary Walker

and other reformers have done with their coat-tails in our own day—an evidence that revolutions sometimes go backward.

**HEATHEN, n.** A benighted creature who has the folly to worship something that he can see and feel.

**HEAVEN, n.** A place where the wicked cease from troubling you with talk of their personal affairs, and the good listen with attention while you expound your own.

**HELPMATE, n.** A wife, or bitter half.

"Now, why is yer wife called a helpmate, Pat?"  
Says the priest. "Since the time o' yer wooin' She's niver assisted in what ye were at—  
For it's naught ye are ever doin'."

"That's true of yer Riverence," Patrick replies,  
And no sign of contrition evinces;  
"But, bedad, it's a fact which the word implies,  
For she helps to mate the expences!"  
—*Marley Wottel.*

**HEMP, n.** A plant from whose fibrous bark is made an article of neckwear which is frequently put on after public speaking in the open and prevents the wearer from taking cold.

**HERS, pron.** His.

**HISTORY, n.** An account mostly false, of events mostly unimportant, which are brought about by rulers mostly knaves, and soldiers mostly fools.

**HOMICIDE, n.** The slaying of one human being by another. There are four kinds of homicide: felonious, excusable, justifiable and praiseworthy, but it makes no great difference to the person slain whether he fell by one kind or another—the classification is for the advantage of the lawyers.



**HOSPITALITY**, *n.* The virtue which induces us to feed and lodge certain persons who are not in need of food and lodging.

**HOSTILITY**, *n.* A peculiarly sharp and specially applied sense of the earth's overpopulation. Hostility is classed as active and passive; as (respectively) the feeling of a woman for her female friends, and that which she entertains for all the rest of her sex.

**HOUSE**, *n.* A hollow edifice erected for the habitation of man, rat, mouse, beetle, cockroach, fly, mosquito, flea, bacillus and microbe. *House of Correction*, a place of reward for political and personal service, and for the detention of offenders and appropriations. *House of God*, a building with a steeple and a mortgage on it. *House-dog*, a pestilent beast kept on domestic premises to insult persons passing by and appal the hardy visitor. *House-maid*, a youngerly person of the opposing sex employed to be variously disagreeable and ingeniously unclean in the station in which it has pleased God to place her.

**HUMORIST**, *n.* A plague that would have softened down the hoar austerity of Pharaoh's heart and persuaded him to dismiss Israel with his best wishes, cat-quick.

**HYPOCRITE**, *n.* One who, professing virtues that he does not respect, secures the advantage of seeming to be what he despises.

## I

I is the first letter of the alphabet, the first word of the language, the first thought of the mind, the first object of affection. In grammar

it is a pronoun of the first person and singular number. Its plural is said to be *We*, but how there can be more than one myself is doubtless clearer to the grammarians than it is to the author of this incomparable dictionary. Conception of two myselfs is difficult, but fine. The frank yet graceful use of "I" distinguishes a good writer from a bad; the latter carries it with the manner of a thief trying to cloak his loot.

**ICONOCLAST**, *n.* A breaker of idols, the worshipers whereof are imperfectly gratified by the performance, and most strenuously protest that he unbuildeth but doth not reedify, that he pulleth down but pileth not up. For the poor things would have other idols in place of those he thwacketh upon the mazzard and dispelleth. But the iconoclast saith: "Ye shall have none at all, for ye need them not; and if the rebuilder fooleth round hereabout, behold I will depress the head of him and sit thereon till he squawk it."

**IDIOT**, *n.* A member of a large and powerful tribe whose influence in human affairs has always been dominant and controlling. The Idiot's activity is not confined to any special field of thought or action, but "pervades and regulates the whole." He has the last word in everything; his decision is unappealable. He sets the fashions of opinion and taste, dictates the limitations of speech and circumscribes conduct with a dead-line.

**IDLENESS**, *n.* A model farm where the devil experiments with seeds of new sins and promotes the growth of staple vices.

ILLUSTRIOUS, *adj.* Suitably placed for the shafts of malice, envy and detraction.

IMAGINATION, *n.* A warehouse of facts, with poet and liar in joint ownership.

IMMIGRANT, *n.* An unenlightened person who thinks one country better than another.

IMMODEST, *adj.* Having a strong sense of one's own merit, coupled with a feeble conception of worth in others.

IMMORAL, *adj.* Inexpedient. Whatever in the long run and with regard to the greater number of instances men find to be generally inexpedient comes to be considered wrong, wicked, immoral. If man's notions of right and wrong have any other basis than this of expediency; if they originated, or could have originated, in any other way; if actions have in themselves a moral character apart from, and nowise dependent on, their consequences—then all philosophy is a lie and reason a disorder of the mind.

IMMORTALITY, *n.*

A toy which people cry for,  
And on their knees apply for,  
Dispute, contend and lie for,  
And if allowed  
Would be right proud  
Eternally to die for.

—G. J.

IMPROVIDENCE, *n.* Provision for the needs of today from the revenues of tomorrow.

IMPUNITY, *n.* Wealth.

INDISCRETION, *n.* The guilt of woman.

INFANCY, *n.* The period of our lives when, according to Wordsworth, "Heaven lies about

us." The world begins lying about us pretty soon afterward.

INFIDEL, *n.* In New York, one who does not believe in the Christian religion; in Constantinople, one who does. A kind of scoundrel imperfectly reverent of, and niggardly contributory to, divines, ecclesiastics, popes, parsons, canons, monks, mollahs, voodoos, presbyters, hierophants, prelates, obeah-men, abbés, nuns, missionaries, exhorters, deacons, friars, hadjis, high-priests, muezzins, brahmins, medicine-men, confessors, eminences, elders, primates, prebendaries, pilgrims, prophets, imatums, beneficiaries, clerks, vicars-choral, archbishops, bishops, abbots, priors, preachers, padres, abbesses, caloyers, palmers, curates, patriarchs, bonezs, santons, beadsmen, canonesses, residentiaries, diocesans, deans, subdeans, rural deans, abdals, charm-sellers, archdeacons, hierarchs, class-leaders, incumbents, capitulars, sheiks, talapoins, postulants, scribes, gooroos, precentors, beadles, fakirs, sextons, reverences, revivalists, cenobites, perpetual curates, chaplains, mudjoes, readers, novices, vicars, pastors, rabbis, ulemas, lamas, sacristans, vergers, dervishes, lectors, church wardens, cardinals, prioresses, suffragans, acolytes, rectors, curés, sophis, mutifs and pumpums.

INSURRECTION, *n.* An unsuccessful revolution. Disaffection's failure to substitute misrule for bad government.

INTENTION, *n.* The mind's sense of the prevalence of one set of influences over another set; an effect whose cause is the imminence, imme-

diate or remote, of the performance of an involuntary act.

INTERPRETER, *n.* One who enables two persons of different languages to understand each other by repeating to each what it would have been to the interpreter's advantage for the other to have said.

INTIMACY, *n.* A relation into which fools are providentially drawn for their mutual destruction.

IRRELIGION, *n.* The principal one of the great faiths of the world.

## J

J is a consonant in English, but some nations use it as a vowel—than which nothing could be more absurd. Its original form, which has been but slightly modified, was that of the tail of a subdued dog, and it was not a letter but a character, standing for a Latin verb, *jacere*, "to throw," because when a stone is thrown at a dog the dog's tail assumes that shape. This is the origin of the letter, as expounded by the renowned Dr. Jocolpus Bumer, of the University of Belgrade, who established his conclusion on the subject in a work of three quarto volumes and committed suicide on being reminded that the j in the Roman alphabet had originally no curl.

JEALOUS, *adj.* Unduly concerned about the preservation of that which can be lost only if not worth keeping.

## K

KILL, *v. t.* To create a vacancy without nominating a successor.

**KINDNESS**, *n.* A brief preface to ten volumes of exaction.

**KING**, *n.* A male person commonly known in America as a "crowned head," although he never wears a crown and has usually no head to speak of.

**KISS**, *n.* A word invented by the poets as a rhyme for "bliss." It is supposed to signify, in a general way, some kind of rite or ceremony appertaining to a good understanding; but the manner of its performance is unknown to this lexicographer.

**KORAN**, *n.* A book which the Mohammedans foolishly believe to have been written by divine inspiration, but which Christians know to be a wicked imposture, contradictory to the Holy Scriptures.

## L

**LABOR**, *n.* One of the processes by which A acquires property for B.

**LAUGHTER**, *n.* An interior convulsion, producing a distortion of the features and accompanied by inarticulate noises. It is infectious and, though intermittent, incurable. Liability to attacks of laughter is one of the characteristics distinguishing man from the animals—these being not only inaccessible to the provocation of his example, but impregnable to the microbes having original jurisdiction in bestowal of the disease. Whether laughter could be imparted to animals by inoculation from the human patient is a question that has not been answered by experimentation. Dr. Meir Witchell holds that the infectious character of laughter is due to instantaneous fermentation

of *sputa* diffused in a spray. From this peculiarity he names the disorder *Convulsio spargens*.

LEARNING, *n.* The kind of ignorance distinguishing the studious.

LECTURER, *n.* One with his hand in your pocket, his tongue in your ear and his faith in your patience.

LIBERTY, *n.* One of Imagination's most precious possessions.

The rising People, hot and out of breath,  
Roared round the palace: "Liberty or death!"  
"If death will do," the King said, "let me reign;  
You'll have, I'm sure, no reason to complain."

—*Martha Braymance.*

LIFE, *n.* A spiritual pickle preserving the body from decay. We live in daily apprehension of its loss; yet when lost it is not missed. The question, "Is life worth living?" has been much discussed; particularly by those who think it is not, many of whom have written at great length in support of their view and by careful observance of the laws of health enjoyed for long terms of years the honors of successful controversy.

LIMB, *n.* The branch of a tree or the leg of an American woman.

LOVE, *n.* A temporary insanity curable by marriage or by removal of the patient from the influences under which he incurred the disorder. This disease, like *caries* and many other ailments, is prevalent only among civilized races living under artificial conditions; barbarous nations breathing pure air and eating simple food enjoy immunity from its rav-

ages. It is sometimes fatal, but more frequently to the physician than to the patient.

## M

**MAD**, *adj.* Affected with a high degree of intellectual independence; not conforming to standards of thought, speech and action derived by the conformants from study of themselves; at odds with the majority; in short, unusual. It is noteworthy that persons are pronounced mad by officials destitute of evidence that themselves are sane. For illustration, this present (and illustrious) lexicographer is no firmer in the faith of his own sanity than is any inmate of any madhouse in the land; yet for aught he knows to the contrary, instead of the lofty occupation that seems to him to be engaging his powers he may really be beating his hands against the window bars of an asylum and declaring himself Noah Webster, to the innocent delight of many thoughtless spectators.

**MAGIC**, *n.* An art of converting superstition into coin. There are other arts serving the same high purpose, but the discreet lexicographer does not name them.

**MAGNIFICENT**, *adj.* Having a grandeur or splendor superior to that to which the spectator is accustomed, as the ears of an ass to a rabbit, or the glory of a glowworm to a maggot.

**MAGNITUDE**, *n.* Size. Magnitude being purely relative, nothing is large and nothing small. If everything in the universe were increased in bulk one thousand diameters nothing would be any larger than it was before, but if one thing remained unchanged all the others would



be larger than they had been. To an understanding familiar with the relativity of magnitude and distance the spaces and masses of the astronomer would be no more impressive than those of the microscopist. For anything we know to the contrary, the visible universe may be a small part of an atom, with its component ions, floating in the life-fluid (luminiferous ether) of some animal. Possibly the wee creatures peopling the corpuscles of our own blood are overcome with the proper emotion when contemplating the unthinkable distance from one of these to another.

**MAIDEN**, *n.* A young person of the unfair sex addicted to clewless conduct and views that madden to crime. The genus has a wide geographical distribution, being found wherever sought and deplored wherever found. The maiden is not altogether unpleasing to the eye, nor (without her piano and her views) insupportable to the ear, though in respect to comeliness distinctly inferior to the rainbow, and, with regard to the part of her that is audible, beaten out of the field by the canary—which, also, is more portable.

**MALE**, *n.* A member of the unconsidered, or negligible sex. The male of the human race is commonly known (to the female) as Mere Man. The genus has two varieties: good providers and bad providers.

**MAN**, *n.* An animal so lost in rapturous contemplation of what he thinks he is as to overlook what he indubitably ought to be. His chief occupation is extermination of other animals and his own species, which, however, mul-

tiplies with such insistent rapidity as to infest the whole habitable earth and Canada.

**MARRIAGE, n.** The state or condition of a community consisting of a master, a mistress and two slaves, making in all, two.

**MARTYR, n.** One who moves along the line of least reluctance to a desired death.

**MATERIAL, adj.** Having an actual existence, as distinguished from an imaginary one. Important.

**MAUSOLEUM, n.** The final and funniest folly of the rich.

**MAYONNAISE, n.** One of the sauces which serve the French in place of a state religion.

**ME, pro.** The objectionable case of I. The personal pronoun in English has three cases, the dominative, the objectionable and the oppressive. Each is all three.

**MEANDER, n.** To proceed sinuously and aimlessly. The word is the ancient name of a river about one hundred and fifty miles south of Troy, which turned and twisted in the effort to get out of hearing when the Greeks and Trojans boasted of their prowess.

**MEDAL, n.** A small metal disk given as a reward for virtues, attainments or services more or less authentic.

**MEDICINE, n.** A stone flung down the Bowery to kill a dog in Broadway.

**MIND, n.** A mysterious form of matter secreted by the brain. Its chief activity consists in the endeavor to ascertain its own nature, the futility of the attempt being due to the fact that it has nothing but itself to know itself with. From the Latin *mens*, a fact un-

known to that honest shoe-seller, who, observing that his learned competitor over the way had displayed the motto "*Mens conscia recti*," emblazoned his own shop front with the words "Men's, women's and children's conscia recti."

**MINISTER, n.** An agent of a higher power with a lower responsibility. In diplomacy an officer sent into a foreign country as the visible embodiment of his sovereign's hostility. His principal qualification is a degree of plausible inveracity next below that of an ambassador.

**MIRACLE, n.** An act or event out of the order of nature and unaccountable, as beating a normal hand of four kings and an ace with four aces and a king.

**MONARCH, n.** A person engaged in reigning. Formerly the monarch ruled, as the derivation of the word attests, and as many subjects have had occasion to learn. In Russia and the Orient the monarch has still a considerable influence in public affairs and in the disposition of the human head, but in western Europe political administration is mostly entrusted to his ministers, he being somewhat preoccupied with reflections relating to the status of his own head.

**MONARCHIAL GOVERNMENT, n.** Government.

**MONDAY, n.** In Christian countries, the day after the baseball game.

**MONEY, n.** A blessing that is of no advantage to us excepting when we part with it. An evidence of culture and a passport to polite society. Supportable property.

**MONUMENT, n.** A structure intended to commemorate something which either needs no

commemoration or cannot be commemorated. The monument custom has its *reductiones ad absurdum* in monuments "to the unknown dead"—that is to say, monuments to perpetuate the memory of those who have left no memory.

MORAL, *adj.* Conforming to a local and mutable standard of right. Having the quality of general expediency.

MULTITUDE, *n.* A crowd; the source of political wisdom and virtue. In a republic, the object of the statesman's adoration. "In a multitude of counselors there is wisdom," saith the proverb. If many men of equal individual wisdom are wiser than any one of them, it must be that they acquire the excess of wisdom by the mere act of getting together. Whence comes it? Obviously from nowhere—as well say that a range of mountains is higher than the single mountains composing it. A multitude is as wise as its wisest member if it obey him; if not, it is no wiser than its most foolish.

MYTHOLOGY, *n.* The body of a primitive people's belief concerning its origin, early history, heroes, deities and so forth, as distinguished from the true accounts which it invents later.

## N

NEGRO, *n.* The *pièce de résistance* in the American political problem. Representing him by the letter *n*, the Republicans began to build their equation thus: "Let  $n =$  the white man." This, however, appears to give an unsatisfactory solution.

NEIGHBOR, *n.* One whom we are commanded

to love as ourselves, and who does all he knows how to make us disobedient.

NOVEL, *n.* A short story padded. A species of composition bearing the same relation to literature that the panorama bears to art. As it is too long to be read at a sitting the impressions made by its successive parts are successively effaced, as in the panorama. Unity, totality of effect, is impossible; for besides the few pages last read all that is carried in mind is the mere plot of what has gone before. To the romance the novel is what photography is to painting. Its distinguishing principle, probability, corresponds to the literal actuality of the photograph and puts it distinctly into the category of reporting; whereas the free wing of the romancer enables him to mount to such altitudes of imagination as he may be fitted to attain; and the first three essentials of the literary art are imagination, imagination and imagination. The art of writing novels, such as it was, is long dead everywhere except in Russia, where it is new. Peace to its ashes—some of which have a large sale.

NOVEMBER, *n.* The eleventh twelfth of a weariness.

## O

OATH, *n.* In law, a solemn appeal to the Deity, made binding upon the conscience by a penalty for perjury.

OBLIVION, *n.* The state or condition in which the wicked cease from struggling and the dreary are at rest. Fame's eternal dumping ground. Cold storage for high hopes. A place where ambitious authors meet their works without

pride and their betters without envy. A dormitory without an alarm clock.

OCEAN, *n.* A body of water occupying about two-thirds of a world made for man—who has no gills.

OLD, *adj.* In that stage of usefulness which is not inconsistent with general inefficiency, as an *old man*. Discredited by lapse of time and offensive to the popular taste, as an *old book*.

OLYMPIAN, *adj.* Relating to a mountain in Thessaly, once inhabited by gods, now a repository of yellowing newspapers, beer bottles and mutilated sardine cans, attesting the presence of the tourist and his appetite.

OMEN, *n.* A sign that something will happen if nothing happens.

OPPORTUNITY, *n.* A favorable occasion for grasping a disappointment.

OPTIMISM, *n.* The doctrine, or belief, that everything is beautiful, including what is ugly, everything good, especially the bad, and everything right that is wrong. It is held with greatest tenacity by those most accustomed to the mischance of falling into adversity, and is most acceptably expounded with the grin that apes a smile. Being a blind faith, it is inaccessible to the light of disproof—an intellectual disorder, yielding to no treatment but death. It is hereditary, but fortunately not contagious.

OPTIMIST, *n.* A proponent of the doctrine that black is white.

A pessimist applied to God for relief.

"Ah, you wish me to restore your hope and cheerfulness," said God.

"No," replied the petitioner, "I wish you to create something that would justify them."

"The world is all created," said God, "but you have overlooked something—the mortality of the optimist."

**ORTHODOX, n.** An ox wearing the popular religious yoke.

**OTHERWISE, adv.** No better.

**OUTCOME, n.** A particular type of disappointment. By the kind of intelligence that sees in an exception a proof of the rule the wisdom of an act is judged by the outcome, the result. This is immortal nonsense; the wisdom of an act is to be judged by the light that the doer had when he performed it.

## P

**PALACE, n.** A fine and costly residence, particularly that of a great official. The residence of a high dignitary of the Christian Church is called a palace; that of the Founder of his religion was known as a field, or wayside. There is progress.

**PALMISTRY, n.** The 947th method (according to Mimbleshaw's classification) of obtaining money by false pretenses. It consists in "reading character" in the wrinkles made by closing the hand. The pretense is not altogether false; character can really be read very accurately in this way, for the wrinkles in every hand submitted plainly spell the word "dupe." The imposture consists in not reading it aloud.

**PANTALOONS, n.** A nether habiliment of the adult civilized male. The garment is tubular and unprovided with hinges at the points of flexion. Supposed to have been invented by a

humorist. Called "trousers" by the enlightened and "pants" by the unworthy.

PANTHEISM, *n.* The doctrine that everything is God, in contradistinction to the doctrine that God is everything.

PANTOMIME, *n.* A play in which the story is told without violence to the language. The least disagreeable form of dramatic action.

PARDON, *v.* To remit a penalty and restore to a life of crime. To add to the lure of crime the temptation of ingratitude.

PASSPORT, *n.* A document treacherously inflicted upon a citizen going abroad, exposing him as an alien and pointing him out for special reprobation and outrage.

PAST, *n.* That part of Eternity with some small fraction of which we have a slight and regrettable acquaintance. A moving line called the Present parts it from an imaginary period known as the Future. These two grand divisions of Eternity, of which the one is continually effacing the other, are entirely unlike. The one is dark with sorrow and disappointment, the other bright with prosperity and joy. The Past is the region of sobs, the Future is the realm of song. In the one crouches Memory, clad in sackcloth and ashes, mumbling penitential prayer; in the sunshine of the other Hope flies with a free wing, beckoning to temples of success and bowers of ease. Yet the Past is the Future of yesterday, the Future is the Past of tomorrow. They are one—the knowledge and the dream.

PATIENCE, *n.* A minor form of despair, disguised as a virtue.



**PATRIOT, n.** One to whom the interests of a part seem superior to those of the whole. The dupe of statesmen and the tool of conquerors.

**PATRIOTISM, n.** Combustible rubbish ready to the torch of anyone ambitious to illuminate his name.

In Dr. Johnson's famous dictionary patriotism is defined as the last resort of a scoundrel. With all due respect to an enlightened but inferior lexicographer I beg to submit that it is the first.

**PEACE, n.** In international affairs, a period of cheating between two periods of fighting.

**PEDIGREE, n.** The known part of the route from an arboreal ancestor with a swim bladder to an urban descendant with a cigarette.

**PERFECTION, n.** An imaginary state or quality distinguished from the actual by an element known as excellence; an attribute of the critic.

The editor of an English magazine having received a letter pointing out the erroneous nature of his views and style, and signed "Perfection," promptly wrote at the foot of the letter: "I don't agree with you," and mailed it to Matthew Arnold.

**PESSIMISM, n.** A philosophy forced upon the convictions of the observer by the disheartening prevalence of the optimist with his scarecrow hope and his unsightly smile.

**PHILISTINE, n.** One whose mind is the creature of its environment, following the fashion in thought, feeling and sentiment. He is sometimes learned, frequently prosperous, commonly clean and always solemn.

**PHILOSOPHY, n.** A route of many roads leading from nowhere to nothing.

**PHRENOLOGY, n.** The science of picking the

pocket through the scalp. It consists in locating and exploiting the organ that one is a dupe with.

**PHYSICIAN, n.** One upon whom we set our hopes when ill and our dogs when well.

**PHYSIOGNOMY, n.** The art of determining the character of another by the resemblances and differences between his face and our own, which is the standard of excellence.

"There is no art," says Shakespeare, foolish man.

"To read the mind's construction in the face."  
The physiognomists his portrait scan,

And say: "How little wisdom here we trace!  
He knew his face disclosed his mind and heart,  
So, in his own defense, denied our art."

—*Lavatar Shunk.*

**PIANO, n.** A parlor utensil for subduing the impenitent visitor. It is operated by depressing the keys of the machine and the spirits of the audience.

**PICTURE, n.** A representation in two dimensions of something wearisome in three.

**PIE, n.** An advance agent of the reaper whose name is Indigestion.

Cold pie was highly esteemed by the remains.—  
*The Rev. Dr. Mucker, in a Funeral Sermon Over a British Nobleman.*

Cold pie is a detestable  
American comestible.

That's why I'm done—or undone—  
So far from that dear London.

—*From the Headstone of a British Nobleman, in Kalamazoo.*

**PIETY, n.** Reverence for the Supreme Being, based upon His supposed resemblance to man.

The pig is taught by sermons and epistles  
 To think the God of Swine has snout and bristles.  
 —*Judibras.*

**FIG, n.** An animal (*Porcus omnivorus*) closely allied to the human race by the splendor and vivacity of its appetite, which, however, is inferior in scope, for it sticks at pig.

**PIRACY, n.** Commerce without its folly-swaddles, just as God made it.

**PITIFUL, adj.** The state of an enemy or opponent after an imaginary encounter with oneself.

**PLAGARIZE, v.** To take the thought or style of another writer whom one has never, never read.

**PLAN, v. t.** To bother about the best method of accomplishing an accidental result.

**PLATITUDE, n.** The fundamental element and special glory of popular literature. A thought that snores in words that smoke. The wisdom of a million fools in the diction of a dullard. A fossil sentiment in artificial rock. A moral without the fable. All that is mortal of a departed truth. A demi-tasse of milk-and-morality. The Pope's-nose of a featherless peacock. A jelly-fish withering on the shore of the sea of thought. The cackle surviving the egg. A desiccated epigram.

**PLATONIC, adj.** Pertaining to the philosophy of Socrates. Platonic Love is a fool's name for the affection between a disability and a frost.

**PLAUDITS, n.** Coins with which the populace pays those who tickle and devour it.

**PLOW, n.** An implement that cries aloud for hands accustomed to the pen.

**PLUNDER, v.** To take the property of another without observing the decent and customary reticences of theft. To effect a change of ownership with the candid concomitance of a brass band. To wrest the wealth of A from B and leave C lamenting a vanished opportunity.

**POCKET, n.** The cradle of motive and the grave of conscience. In woman this organ is lacking; so she acts without motive, and her conscience, denied burial, remains ever alive, confessing the sins of others.

**POLICE, n.** An armed force for protection and participation.

**POLITENESS, n.** The most acceptable hypocrisy.

**POLITICS, n.** A strife of interests masquerading as a contest of principles. The conduct of public affairs for private advantage.

**POLITICIAN, n.** An eel in the fundamental mud upon which the superstructure of organized society is reared. When he wriggles he mistakes the agitation of his tail for the trembling of the edifice. As compared with the statesman, he suffers the disadvantage of being alive.

**POLYGAMY, n.** A house of atonement, or expiatory chapel, fitted with several stools of repentance, as distinguished from monogamy, which has but one.

**POSTERITY, n.** An appellate court which reverses the judgment of a popular author's contemporaries, the appellant being his obscure competitor.

**POVERTY, n.** A file provided for the teeth of the rats of reform. The number of plans for

its abolition equals that of the reformers who suffer from it, plus that of the philosophers who know nothing about it. Its victims are distinguished by possession of all the virtues and by their faith in leaders seeking to conduct them into a prosperity where they believe these to be unknown.

PRAY, *v.* To ask that the laws of the universe be annulled in behalf of a single petitioner confessedly unworthy.

PREDESTINATION, *n.* The doctrine that all things occur according to program. This doctrine should not be confused with that of foreordination, which means that all things are programmed, but does not affirm their occurrence, that being only an implication from other doctrines by which this is entailed. The difference is great enough to have deluged Christendom with ink, to say nothing of the gore. With the distinction of the two doctrines kept well in mind, and a reverent belief in both, one may hope to escape perdition if spared.

PREFERENCE, *n.* A sentiment, or frame of mind, induced by the erroneous belief that one thing is better than another.

An ancient philosopher, expounding his conviction that life is no better than death, was asked by a disciple why, then, he did not die. "Because," he replied, "death is no better than life."

It is longer. ◀

PREJUDICE, *n.* A vagrant opinion without visible means of support.

PRELATE, *n.* A church officer having a superior degree of holiness and a fat preferment.

One of Heaven's aristocracy. A gentleman of God.

**PREROGATIVE**, *n.* A sovereign's right to do wrong.

**PRESBYTERIAN**, *n.* One who holds the conviction that the governing authorities of the Church should be called presbyters.

**PRESCRIPTION**, *n.* A physician's guess at what will best prolong the situation with least harm to the patient.

**PRESENT**, *n.* That part of eternity dividing the domain of disappointment from the realm of hope.

**PRESENTABLE**, *adj.* Hideously appareled after the manner of the time and place.

In Boorioboola-Gha a man is presentable on occasions of ceremony if he have his abdomen painted a bright blue and wear a cow's tail; in New York he may, if it please him, omit the paint, but after sunset he must wear two tails made of the wool of a sheep and dyed black.

**PREVARICATOR**, *n.* A liar in the caterpillar state.

**PRICE**, *n.* Value, plus a reasonable sum for the wear and tear of conscience in demanding it.

**PRISON**, *n.* A place of punishments and rewards. The poet assures us that—

Stone walls do not a prison make,  
but a combination of the stone wall, the political parasite and the moral instructor is no garden of sweets.

**PROJECTILE**, *n.* The final arbiter in international disputes. Formerly these disputes were settled by physical contact of the disputants, with such simple arguments as the rudimentary

logic of the times could supply—the sword, the spear, and so forth. With the growth of prudence in military affairs the projectile came more and more into favor, and is now held in high esteem by the most courageous. Its capital defect is that it requires personal attendance at the point of propulsion.

**PROOF**, *n.* Evidence having a shade more of plausibility than of unlikelihood. The testimony of two credible witnesses as opposed to that of only one.

**PROOFREADER**, *n.* A malefactor who atones for making your writing nonsense by permitting the compositor to make it unintelligible.

**PROPERTY**, *n.* Any material thing, having no particular value, that may be held by A against the cupidity of B. Whatever gratifies the passion for possession in one and disappoints it in all others. The object of man's brief rapacity and long indifference.

**PROVIDENTIAL**, *adj.* Unexpectedly and conspicuously beneficial to the person describing it.

**PUBLISH**, *v.* In literary affairs, to become the fundamental element in a cone of critics.

**PUSH**, *n.* One of the two things mainly conducive to success, especially in politics. The other is Pull.

## Q

**QUEEN**, *n.* A woman by whom the realm is ruled when there is a king, and through whom it is ruled when there is not.

**QUILL**, *n.* An implement of torture yielded by a goose and commonly wielded by an ass.

This use of the quill is now obsolete, but its modern equivalent, the steel pen, is wielded by the same everlasting Presence.

**QUORUM**, *n.* A sufficient number of members of a deliberative body to have their own way and their own way of having it. In the United States Senate a quorum consists of the chairman of the Committee on Finance and a messenger from the White House; in the House of Representatives, of the Speaker and the devil.

**QUOTIENT**, *n.* A number showing how many times a sum of money belonging to one person is contained in the pocket of another—usually about as many times as it can be got there.

## R

**RABBLE**, *n.* In a republic, those who exercise a supreme authority tempered by fraudulent elections. The rabble is like the sacred Simurgh, of Arabian fable—omnipotent on condition that it do nothing. (The word is Aristocratese, and has no exact equivalent in our tongue, but means, as nearly as may be, "soaring swine.")

**RADICALISM**, *n.* The conservatism of tomorrow injected into the affairs of today.

**RATIONAL**, *adj.* Devoid of all delusions save those of observation, experience and reflection.

**RAILROAD**, *n.* The chief of many mechanical devices enabling us to get away from where we are to where we are no better off. For this purpose the railroad is held in the highest favor by the optimist, for it permits him to make the transit with great expedition.

**READING**, *n.* The general body of what one



reads. In our country it consists, as a rule, of Indiana novels, short stories in "dialect" and humor in slang.

We know by one's reading  
His learning and breeding;  
But what draws his laughter  
We know his Hereafter.  
Read nothing, laugh never—  
The 'Sphinx was less clever!  
—*Jupiter Muke.*

**REALISM, n.** The art of depicting nature as is seen by toads. The charm suffusing a landscape painted by a mole, or a story written by a measuring-worm.

**REALITY, n.** The dream of a mad philosopher. That which would remain in the cupel if one should assay a phantom. The nucleus of a vacuum.

**REAR, n.** In American military matters, that exposed part of the army that is nearest to Congress.

**REASON, v. i.** To weigh probabilities in the scales of desire.

**REASONABLE, adj.** Accessible to the infection of our own opinions. Hospitable to persuasion dissuasion and evasion.

**REBEL, n.** A proponent of a new misrule who has failed to establish it.

**RECONCILIATION, n.** A suspension of hostilities. An armed truce for the purpose of digging up the dead.

**RECONSIDER, v.** To seek a justification for a decision already made.

**RECTOR, n.** In the Church of England, the Third Person of the parochial Trinity, the Curate and the Vicar being the other two.

**REDEMPTION, n.** Deliverance of sinners from

the penalty of their sin, through their murder of the deity against whom they sinned. The doctrine of Redemption is the fundamental mystery of our holy religion, and whoso believeth in it shall not perish, but have everlasting life in which to try to understand it.

REFERENDUM, *n.* A law for submission of proposed legislation to a popular vote to learn the nonsensus of public opinion.

REFLECTION, *n.* An action of the mind whereby we obtain a clearer view of our relation to the things of yesterday and are able to avoid the perils that we shall not again encounter.

REFORM, *n.* A thing that mostly satisfies reformers opposed to reformation.

REFUSAL, *n.* Denial of something desired; as an elderly maiden's hand in marriage, to a rich and handsome suitor; a valuable franchise to a rich corporation, by an alderman; absolution to an impenitent king, by a priest, and so forth. Refusals are graded in a descending scale of finality thus: the refusal absolute, the refusal conditional, the refusal tentative and the refusal feminine. The last is called by some casuists the refusal assentive.

RELIGION, *n.* A daughter of Hope and Fear, explaining to Ignorance the nature of the Unknowable.

"What is your religion, my son?" inquired the Archbishop of Rheims.

"Pardon, monseigneur," replied Rochebriant; "I am ashamed of it."

"Then why do you not become an atheist?"

"Impossible! I should be ashamed of atheism."

"In that case, monsieur, you should join the Protestants."

**RELIQUARY, n.** A receptacle for such sacred objects as pieces of the true cross, short-ribs of saints, the ears of Balaam's ass, the lung of the cock that called Peter to repentance and so forth. Reliquaries are commonly of metal, and provided with a lock to prevent the contents from coming out and performing miracles at unseasonable times. A feather from the wing of the Angel of the Annunciation once escaped during a sermon in Saint Peter's and so tickled the noses of the congregation that they awoke and sneezed with great vehemence three times each. It is related in the "Gesta Sanctorum" that a sacristan in the Canterbury cathedral surprised the head of Saint Dennis in the library. Reprimanded by its stern custodian, it explained that it was seeking a body of doctrine. This unseemly levity so enraged the diocesan that the offender was publicly anathematized, thrown into the Stour and replaced by another head of Saint Dennis, brought from Rome.

**REPRESENTATIVE, n.** In national politics, a member of the Lower House in this world, and without discernible hope of promotion in the next.

**REPUBLIC, n.** A nation in which, the thing governing and the thing governed being the same, there is only a permitted authority to enforce an optional obedience. In a republic the foundation of public order is the ever lessening habit of submission inherited from ancestors who, being truly governed, submitted because they had to. There are as many kinds of republics as there are gradations between the

despotism whence they came and the anarchy whither they lead.

**RESOLUTE**, *adj.* Obstinate in a course that we approve.

**RESPECTABILITY**, *n.* The offspring of a *liaison* between a bald head and a bank account.

**RESPONSIBILITY**, *n.* A detachable burden easily shifted to the shoulders of God, Fate, Fortune, Luck or one's neighbor. In the days of astrology it was customary to unload it upon a star.

**REVELATION**, *n.* A famous book in which St. John the Divine concealed all that he knew. The revealing is done by the commentators, who know nothing.

**REVERENCE**, *n.* The spiritual attitude of a man to a god and a dog to a man.

**REVOLUTION**, *n.* In politics, an abrupt change in the form of misgovernment. Specifically, in American history, the substitution of the rule of an Administration for that of a Ministry, whereby the welfare and happiness of the people were advanced a full half-inch. Revolutions are usually accompanied by a considerable effusion of blood, but are accounted worth it—this appraisal being made by beneficiaries whose blood had not the mischance to be shed. The French revolution is of incalculable value to the Socialist of today; when he pulls the string actuating its bones its gestures are inexpressibly terrifying to gory tyrants suspected of fomenting law and order.

**RICH**, *adj.* Holding in trust and subject to an accounting the property of the indolent, the incompetent, the unthrifty, the envious and the

luckless. That is the view that prevails in the underworld, where the Brotherhood of Man finds its most logical development and candid advocacy. To denizens of the midworld the word means good and wise.

**RICHES, n.**

A gift from Heaven signifying, "This is my beloved son, in whom I am well-pleased."—*John D. Rockefeller.*

The reward of toil and virtue.—*J. P. Morgan.*

The savings of many in the hands of one.—*Eugene Debs.*

To these excellent definitions the inspired lexicographer feels that he can add nothing of value.

**RIGHT, n.** Legitimate authority to be, to do or to have; as the right to be a king, the right to do one's neighbor, the right to have measles, and the like. The first of these rights was once universally believed to be derived directly from the will of God; and this is still sometimes affirmed *in partibus infidelium* outside the enlightened realms of Democracy.

**RIGHTEOUSNESS, n.** A sturdy virtue that was once found among the Pantidoodles inhabiting the lower part of the peninsula of Oque. Some feeble attempts were made by returned missionaries to introduce it into several European countries, but it appears to have been imperfectly expounded.

**RITE, n.** A religious or semi-religious ceremony fixed by law, precept or custom, with the essential oil of sincerity carefully squeezed out of it.

**RITUALISM, n.** A Dutch Garden of God where He may walk in rectilinear freedom, keeping off the grass.

**ROAD, *n.*** A strip of land along which one may pass from where it is too tiresome to be to where it is futile to go.

**ROBBER, *n.*** A candid man of affairs.

It is related of Voltaire that one night he and some traveling companions lodged at a wayside inn. The surroundings were suggestive, and after supper they agreed to tell robber stories in turn. When Voltaire's turn came he said: "Once there was a Farmer-General of the Revenues." Saying nothing more, he was encouraged to continue. "That," he said, "is the story."

**ROMANCE, *n.*** Fiction that owes no allegiance to the God of Things as They Are. In the novel the writer's thought is tethered to probability, as a domestic horse to the hitching-post, but in romance it ranges at will over the entire region of the imagination—free, lawless, immune to bit and rein. Your novelist is a poor creature, as Carlyle might say—a mere reporter. He may invent his characters and plot, but he must not imagine anything taking place that might not occur, albeit his entire narrative is candidly a lie. Why he imposes this hard condition on himself, and "drags at each remove a lengthening chain" of his own forging he can explain in ten thick volumes without illuminating by so much as a candle's ray the black profound of his own ignorance of the matter. There are great novels, for great writers have "laid waste their powers" to write them, but it remains true that far and away the most fascinating fiction that we have is "The Thousand and One Nights."

**RUBBISH, *n.*** Worthless matter, such as the religions, philosophies, literatures, arts and

sciences of the tribes infesting the regions lying due south from Boreaplas.

**RUIN, v.** To destroy. Specifically, to destroy a maid's belief in the virtue of maids.

**RUMOR, n.** A favorite weapon of the assassins of character.

## S

**SABBATH, n.** A weekly festival having its origin in the fact that God made the world in six days and was arrested on the seventh. Among the Jews observance of the day was enforced by a Commandment of which this is the Christian version: "Remember the seventh day to make thy neighbor keep it wholly." To the Creator it seemed fit and expedient that the Sabbath should be the last day of the week, but the Early Fathers of the Church held other views. So great is the sanctity of the day that even where the Lord holds a doubtful and precarious jurisdiction over those who go down to (and down into) the sea it is reverently recognized, as is manifest in the following deep-water version of the Fourth Commandment:

Six days shalt thou labor and do all thou art able,  
And on the seventh holystone the deck and scrape  
the cable.

Decks are no longer holystoned, but the cable still supplies the captain with opportunity to attest a pious respect for the divine ordinance.

**SACRAMENT, n.** A solemn religious ceremony to which several degrees of authority and significance are attached. Rome has seven sacraments, but the Protestant churches, being less prosperous, feel that they can afford only two.

and these of inferior sanctity. Some of the smaller sects have no sacraments at all—for which mean economy they will indubitably be damned.

**SACRED**, *adj.* Dedicated to some religious purpose; having a divine character; inspiring solemn thoughts or emotions; as, the Dalai Lama of Thibet; the Moogum of M'bwango; the temple of Apes in Ceylon; the Cow in India; the Crocodile, the Cat and the Onion of ancient Egypt; the Mufti of Moosh; the hair of the dog that bit Noah, etc.

All things are either sacred or profane.

The former to ecclesiasts bring gain;

The latter to the devil appertain.

—*Dumbo Omohundro.*

**SAINT**, *n.* A dead sinner revised and edited.

The Duchess of Orleans relates that the irreverent old calumniator, Marshal Villeroi, who in his youth had known St. Francis de Sales, said, on hearing him called saint: "I am delighted to hear that Monsieur de Sales is a saint. He was fond of saying indelicate things, and used to cheat at cards. In other respects he was a perfect gentleman, though a fool."

**SATAN**, *n.* One of the Creator's lamentable mistakes, repented in sashcloth and ashes.

Being instated as an archangel, Satan made himself multifariously objectionable and was finally expelled from Heaven. Halfway in his descent he paused, bent his head in thought a moment and at last went back. "There is one favor that I should like to ask," said he.

"Name it."

"Man, I understand, is about to be created. He will need laws."

"What, wretch! you his appointed adversary,



charged from the dawn of eternity with hatred of his soul—you ask for the right to make his laws?"

"Pardon; what I have to ask is that he be permitted to make them himself."

It was so ordered.

**SAW, n.** A trite popular saying, or proverb. (Figurative and colloquial.) So called because it makes its way into a wooden head.

**SCRAP-BOOK, n.** A book that is commonly edited by a fool. Many persons of some small distinction compile scrap-books containing whatever they happen to read about themselves or employ others to collect.

**SCRIPTURES, n.** The sacred books of our holy religion, as distinguished from the false and profane writings on which all other faiths are based.

**SOUL, n.** A spiritual entity concerning which there hath been brave disputation. Plato held that those souls which in a previous state of existence (antedating Athens) had obtained the clearest glimpses of eternal truth entered into the bodies of persons who became philosophers. Plato was himself a philosopher. The souls that had least contemplated divine truth animated the bodies of usurpers and despots. Dionysius I, who had threatened to decapitate the broad-browed philosopher, was a usurper and despot. Plato, doubtless, was not the first to construct a system of philosophy that could be quoted against his enemies; certainly he was not the last.

"Concerning the nature of the soul," saith the renowned author of *Diversiones Sanctorum*, "there hath been hardly more argument than that of its place in the body. Mine own be-

lief is that the soul hath her seat in the abdomen—in which faith we may discern and interpret a truth hitherto unintelligible, namely that the glutton is of all men most devout. He is said in the Scripture to 'make a god of his belly'—why, then, should he not be pious, having ever his Deity with him to freshen his faith? Who so well as he can know the might and majesty that he shrines? Truly and soberly, the soul and the stomach are one Divine Entity; and such was the belief of Promasius, who nevertheless erred in denying it immortality. He had observed that its visible and material substance failed and decayed with the rest of the body after death, but of its immaterial essence he knew nothing. This is what we call the Appetite, and it survives the wreck and reek of mortality, to be rewarded or punished in another world, according to what it hath demanded in the flesh. The Appetite whose coarse clamoring was for the unwholesome viands of the general market and the public refectory shall be cast into eternal famine, whilst that which firmly though civilly insisted on ortolans, caviar, terrapin, anchovies, *pâtés de foie gras* and all such Christian comestibles shall flesh its spiritual tooth in the souls of them forever and ever, and wreak its divine thirst upon the immortal parts of the rarest and richest wines ever quaffed here below. Such is my religious faith, though I grieve to confess that neither His Holiness the Pope nor His Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury (whom I equally and profoundly revere) will assent to its dissemination."

**SUCCESS, n.** The one unpardonable sin against one's fellows.

**SUFFRAGE, n.** Expression of opinion by means of a ballot. The right of suffrage (which is held to be both a privilege and a duty) means, as commonly interpreted, the right to vote for the man of another man's choice, and is highly prized. Refusal to do so has the bad name of "incivism." The incivilian, however, cannot be properly arraigned for his crime, for there is no legitimate accuser. If the accuser is himself guilty he has no standing in the court of opinion; if not, he profits by the crime, for A's abstention from voting gives greater weight to the vote of B. By female suffrage is meant the right of a woman to vote as some man tells her to. It is based on female responsibility, which is somewhat limited. The woman most eager to jump out of her petticoat to assert her rights is first to jump back into it when threatened with a switching for misusing them.

## T

**TABLE D' HÔTE, n.** A caterer's thrifty concession to the universal passion for irresponsibility.

**TALK, v. t.** To commit an indiscretion without temptation, from an impulse without purpose.

**TARIFF, n.** A scale of taxes on imports, designed to protect the domestic producer against the greed of his consumer.

**TELEPHONE, n.** An invention of the devil which abrogates some of the advantages of making a disagreeable person keep his distance.

**TELESCOPE**, *n.* A device having a relation to the eye similar to that of the telephone to the ear, enabling distant objects to plague us with a multitude of needless details. Luckily it is unprovided with a bell summoning us to the sacrifice.

**THEOSOPHY**, *n.* An ancient faith having all the certitude of religion and all the mystery of science. The modern Theosophist holds, with the Buddhists, that we live an incalculable number of times on this earth, in as many several bodies, because one life is not long enough for our complete spiritual development; that is, a single lifetime does not suffice for us to become as wise and good as we choose to wish to become. To be absolutely wise and good—that is perfection; and the Theosophist is so keen-sighted as to have observed that everything desirous of improvement eventually attains perfection. Less competent observers are disposed to except cats, which seem neither wiser nor better than they were last year. The greatest and fattest of recent Theosophists was the late Madame Blavatsky, who had no cat.

**TRINITY**, *n.* In the multiplex theism of certain Christian churches, three entirely distinct deities consistent with only one. Subordinate deities of the polytheistic faith, such as devils and angels, are not dowered with the power of combination, and must urge individually their claims to adoration and propitiation. The Trinity is one of the most sublime mysteries of our holy religion. In rejecting it because it is incomprehensible, Unitarians betray their

inadequate sense of theological fundamentals. In religion we believe only what we do not understand, except in the instance of an intelligible doctrine that contradicts an incomprehensible one. In that case we believe the former as a part of the latter.

**TRUTH, *n.*** An ingenious compound of desirability and appearance. Discovery of truth is the sole purpose of philosophy, which is the most ancient occupation of the human mind and has a fair prospect of existing with increasing activity to the end of time.

**TRUST, *n.*** In American politics, a large corporation composed in greater part of thrifty working men, widows of small means, orphans in the care of guardians and the courts, with many similar malefactors and public enemies.

**TYPE, *n.*** Pestilent bits of metal suspected of destroying civilization and enlightenment, despite their obvious agency in this incomparable dictionary.

**UBIQUITY, *n.*** The gift of power of being in all places at one time, but not in all places at all times, which is omnipresence, an attribute of God and the luminiferous ether only. This important distinction between ubiquity and omnipresence was not clear to the medieval Church and there was much bloodshed about it. Certain Lutherans, who affirmed the presence everywhere of Christ's body were known as Ubiquitarians. For this error they were doubtless damned, for Christ's body is present only in the eucharist, though that sacrament may be performed in more than one place simultaneously. In recent times ubiquity

has not always been understood—not even by Sir Boyle Roche, for example, who held that a man cannot be in two places at once unless he is a bird.

UGLINESS, *n.* A gift of the gods to certain women, entailing virtue without humility.

UN-AMERICAN, *adj.* Wicked, intolerable, heathenish.

UNCTION, *n.* An oiling, or greasing. The rite of extreme unction consists in touching with oil consecrated by a bishop several parts of the body of one engaged in dying.

UNDERSTANDING, *n.* A cerebral secretion that enables one having it to know a house from a horse by the roof on the house. Its nature and laws have been exhaustively expounded by Locke, who rode a house, and Kant, who lived in a horse.

UNITARIAN, *n.* One who denies the divinity of a Trinitarian.

UNIVERSALIST, *n.* One who foregoes the advantage of a Hell for persons of another faith.

URBANITY, *n.* The kind of civility that urban observers ascribe to dwellers in all cities but New York. Its commonest expression is heard in the words, "I beg your pardon," and it is not inconsistent with disregard of the rights of others.

USAGE, *n.* The First Person of the literary Trinity, the Second and Third being Custom and Conventionality. Imbued with a decent reverence for this Holy Triad an industrious writer may hope to produce books that will live as long as the fashion.

UXORIOUSNESS, *n.* A perverted affection that has strayed to one's own wife.

## V

**VALOR**, *n.* A soldierly compound of vanity, duty and the gambler's hope.

**VANITY**, *n.* The tribute of a fool to the worth of the nearest ass.

**VIRTUES**, *n. pl.* Certain abstentions.

**VOTE**, *n.* The instrument and symbol of a freeman's power to make a fool of himself and a wreck of his country.

## W

**WALL STREET**, *n.* A symbol of sin for every devil to rebuke. That Wall Street is a den of thieves is a belief that serves every unsuccessful thief in place of a hope in Heaven.

**WAR**, *n.* A by-product of the arts of peace. The most menacing political condition is a period of international amity. The student of history who has not been taught to expect the unexpected may justly boast himself inaccessible to the light. "In time of peace prepare for war" has a deeper meaning than is commonly discerned; it means, not merely that all things earthly have an end—that change is the one immutable and eternal law—but that the soil of peace is thickly sown with seeds of war and singularly suited to their germination and growth. It was when Kubla Khan had decreed his "stately pleasure dome"—when, that is to say, there were peace and fat feasting in Xanadu—that he

heard from far  
Ancestral voices prophesying war.

One of the greatest of poets, Coleridge was one of the wisest of men, and it was not for nothing that he read us this parable. Let us

have a little less of "hands across the sea," and a little more of that elemental distrust that is the security of nations. War loves to come like a thief in the night; professions of eternal amity provide the night.

**WEAKNESSES**, *n. pl.* Certain primal powers of Tyrant Woman wherewith she holds dominion over the male of her species, binding him to the service of her will and paralyzing his rebellious energies.

**WEATHER**, *n.* The climate of an hour. A permanent topic of conversation among persons whom it does not interest, but who have inherited the tendency to chatter about it from naked arboreal ancestors whom it keenly concerned. The setting up of official weather bureaus and their maintenance in mendacity prove that even governments are accessible to suasion by the rude forefathers of the jungle.

**WEDDING**, *n.* A ceremony at which two persons undertake to become one, one undertakes to become nothing, and nothing undertakes to become supportable.

**WINE**, *n.* Fermented grape-juice known to the Women's Christian Union as "liquor," sometimes as "rum." Wine, madam, is God's next best gift to man.

**WIT**, *n.* The salt with which the American humorist spoils his intellectual cookery by leaving it out.

**WOMAN**, *n.* An animal usually living in the vicinity of Man, and having a rudimentary susceptibility to domestication. It is credited by many of the elder zoölogists with a certain vestigial docility acquired in a former state



of seclusion, but naturalists of the postsusan-anthony period, having no knowledge of the seclusion, deny the virtue and declare that such as creation's dawn beheld, it roareth now. The species is the most widely distributed of all beasts of prey, infesting all habitable parts of the globe, from Greenland's spicy mountains to India's moral strand. The popular name (wolfman) is incorrect, for the creature is of the cat kind. The woman is lithe and graceful in its movements, especially the American variety (*Felis pugnans*), is omnivorous and can be taught not to talk.—*Balthasar Pober*.

WORSHIP, *n.* Homo Creator's testimony to the sound construction and fine finish of Deus Creatus. A popular form of abjection, having an element of pride.

## X

X in our alphabet being a needless letter has an added invincibility to the attacks of the spelling reformers, and like them, will doubtless last as long as the language. X is the sacred symbol of ten dollars, and in such words as Xmas, Xn, etc., stands for Christ, not, as is popularly supposed, because it represents a cross, but because the corresponding letter in the Greek alphabet is the initial of his name. If it represented a cross it would stand for St. Andrew who "testified" upon one of that shape. In the algebra of psychology  $x$  stands for Woman's mind. Words beginning with X are Grecian and will not be defined in this standard English dictionary.

## Y

**YANKEE**, *n.* In Europe, an American. In the Northern States of our Union, a New Englander. In the Southern States the word is unknown.

**YEAR**, *n.* A period of three hundred and sixty-five disappointments.

**YESTERDAY**, *n.* The infancy of youth, the youth of manhood, the entire past of age.

**YOKE**, *n.* An implement, madam, to whose Latin name, *jugum*, we owe one of the most illuminating words in our language—a word that defines the matrimonial situation with precision, point and poignancy. A thousand apologies for withholding it.

**YOUTH**, *n.* The Period of Possibility, when Archimedes finds a fulcrum, Cassandra has a following and seven cities compete for the honor of endowing a living Homer.

## Z

**ZEAL**, *n.* A certain nervous disorder afflicting the young and inexperienced. A passion that goeth before a sprawl.

**ZEUS**, *n.* The chief of Grecian gods, adored by the Romans as Jupiter and by the modern Americans as God, Gold, Mob and Dog. Some explorers who have touched upon the shores of America, and one who professes to have penetrated a considerable distance into the interior, have thought that these four names stand for as many distinct deities, but in his monumental work on Surviving Faiths, Frumpp insists that the natives are monotheists, each having no other god than himself, whom he worships under many sacred names.



